

STORY OF
Ida Kahn and Mary Stone



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LITTLE did I dream, when sending my money to China, that a Chinese girl would come over here and lead my own daughter to Christ" said a Christian woman in Ohio, as she gratefully acknowledged that Dr. Hu King Eng had been the means under God of winning her child to Christ.

In 1896, five years after Dr. Hu's return, two other Chinese girls, Ida Kahn and Mary Stone, graduated with honor from the medical department of the Michigan University.

In many of their studies they took highest rank. That they were loved and popular may be known from the fact that one was president of her class for some time, and of the other it was said by one who knew her intimately, "She has the most beautiful and perfect Christian character of any one I ever knew."

At their farewell reception gifts too numerous to mention, both useful and ornamental, were showered upon them, as testimonials of the appreciation in which they were held.

As they received their diplomas from the hands of President Angell — clad in their native costume — students and faculty joined in such an outburst of applause as was given to no other graduates.

Mary Stone was born on the "first day of the third moon" in 1873, in a Christian home. Her parents were among the first Christian converts in China. With true devotion the little black-eyed baby was baptized and consecrated to "Heaven's Lord." Dr. Ida Kahn, in writing of her friend's early life, says :

"With a faith which was strong and clear they brought up little Mary with natural feet, thus giving her the distinction of being the first native girl, not a slave, in Central and West China to have her feet left as God had made them.

"She began her Chinese studies early and proved an apt student. When she was seven years old two missionary doctors opened a hospital in Kiu Kiang. Seeing the good accomplished by these ladies, Mary's father thought he would like to have his daughter help her country women in the same way. So he took her to one of the physicians, asking her to teach Mary to be a doctor. This she kindly consented to do, as Miss Howe agreed first to teach her English.

"Her life was a very quiet and happy one. Meanwhile the two physicians had gone away from Kiu Kiang, one to her Heavenly Father and the other to America. As there are no means of obtaining a thorough training in medicine in China, Miss Howe resolved to bring Mary to America for a medical education.

"At nineteen years of age she obtained her matriculation at the University of Michigan. She graduated in 1896 and returned to work among her own people."

The second of these native Christian Chinese doctors, Ida Kahn, was also born in 1873, but began her life in a heathen home. We will let Dr. Stone tell the story :

"According to the Chinese custom, a fortune-teller was called to tell her fate and to advise the mother concerning this new daughter. The blind man came, leaning for support on a small boy, hired by the fortune-teller to lead the way. Then, though his blind eyes could not see the bright young face before him, he pronounced that she should be killed or sent away to another family. 'For,' said he, 'if she is allowed to live in this house you could not have the son you so desired, and who will be your heir when you die?' The mother was not so hard-hearted as to kill her child, nor was she compelled to do it by her good-naturd husband, who in this matter excelled some of his hot-tempered countrymen who drive their wives to shameful lengths by harsh words or blows. So accordingly a family was to be sought that would satisfy her ambitious motherly heart. Another fortune-teller was consulted, and this time it was found that Ida was born under the dog's star, while her intended was born under the cat's star, which was just the reverse of what it should be, for in China girls should always be inferior to boys. But the child's life was not to be so easily slighted, when the Heavenly Father had sent it down with a mission to fulfil. After learning the story of the child from her native teacher, Miss Howe and another missionary lady went in sedan chairs to Ida's home and carried her back with them that very afternoon, and Miss

Howe adopted her as her own. Ida's early years were spent in studying English, as well as Chinese, but of course, being a native, she spent more of her time on Chinese studies. She was baptized at twelve years of age and at thirteen she was received into full connection with the church.

"As she grew older she saw the misery that always follows idol worship and the untold sufferings the women and children in China are subjected to ; then the Lord put unto her heart the desire to seek a medical education and consecrate it to the Lord's service, and thus win souls by showing them Christ's spirit. Ida says : 'When I think of what my life might have been, and what, through God's grace, it is, I think there is nothing that God has given me that I would not gladly use in his service.'

"Miss Howe brought her over to America to study medicine, as it was necessary in order to obtain a thorough training, for many practical courses, such as dissection, etc., are not allowed in China.

"At the age of eighteen she passed the entrance examinations to the medical department of Michigan University at Ann Arbor. She finished her course of studies the next year and began her work among her sisters in China, pointing them to the Great Physician, who is able to make them every whit whole."

A lawyer said to Dr. Kahn : "I am glad you are going back as a doctor. Doctors are more needed than missionaries."

"No, sir," said the doctor. "I do not think so, eternity is longer than time." Though zealous in the profession, both doctors feel that the soul is even more important than the body, and the great purpose in their faithful ministrations to the sick and weary bodies of their sisters is to lead the sin-sick soul to the Great Physician.

The success of these two devoted young doctors was so remarkable that it attracted the attention of the government and a very flattering offer of positions in the new university in Shanghai was pressed upon them by a high official. This they did not deem it wise to accept, but remained in the service of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, where they are free to do their Christian work.

It pays to work and pray for China !